



# Gang-gang

**MAY 2014**

Newsletter of the Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc.

## MAY MEETING

**Wednesday 14 May 2014**

**7.30 pm.**

*Canberra Girls Grammar School, Multi-media centre, corner Gawler Cres and Melbourne Ave, Deakin.*

There will be three shorter presentations at the May meeting.

The first presentation on an **aspect of COG's history** in relation to **COG's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations** will be by **Chris Davey** on "History of the COG Bird Song Tapes and CD".

Next will be **Amelia Coman**, a student at the ANU under Leo Joseph on "**A genetic and morphological investigation of a Canberra local**".

Thornbills are found throughout Canberra and all over Australia; however, for four species there hasn't been much research into how they are related to each other and what mechanisms drive their morphological evolution. For her honours thesis Amelia studied just that. Her species of choice were the **Brown Thornbill**, the **Inland Thornbill**, the **Tasmanian Thornbill** and the **Mountain Thornbill**. Using 8 different

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## What to watch out for this month

Over the past couple of months many readers will have observed birds migrating both out of and into the ACT. The best known and most obvious of these will have been the annual **Yellow-faced Honeyeater** migration. This year their migration was interesting as it occurred in three distinct peaks, the first of these being early on 19 March as described in last month's column. The second of these was eleven days later on the foggy morning of Sunday 30 March, but after this over a fortnight of rain and unfavourably warm overnight conditions delayed the last peak until Wednesday 16 April. Lindsay Hansch described this on the chatline as the best day so far, with thousands passing over his house at Jerrabomberra in the morning, mostly **Yellow-faced** with a good number of **White-naped Honeyeaters**, which usually predominate in the latter half

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White-naped Honeyeater

*Photo: James Rolevink*

**Everyone welcome**

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## May Meeting—continued from Page 1

loci and multiple morphological measurements she was able to determine some of the mechanisms driving diversity within this taxon.

The final presentation will be by **Ding Li Yong**, a graduate student at the ANU's Fenner School of Environment and Society on "**Chasing birds in the Malaysian Jungle**".

The lowland forests of East and West Malaysia are no doubt the richest habitats for birds in all tropical Asia. Some of the best-studied sites of no more than a few hectares are home to nearly 240 regular residents, including colourful hornbills, broadbills, pheasants, trogons and, most of all, the unnaturally gaudy pittas. A few of these have kin in the forests of Australia, particularly the gerygones, monarchs and a few of the 'babblers'. Ding Li Yong will share some of his birdwatching and research experiences from the Malaysian jungle based on 15 years of visits. He will also talk about some of the best sites to visit and how these can be visited independently.

## Committee News

COG has paid for the materials to construct an aviary at Mulligans Flat to house Bush Stone-curlews prior to their re-introduction to the reserve.

Membership fees for 2014-15 are due on July 1. A membership form is printed in this issue, but you can use the online form to renew your membership. If you **pay electronically please ensure your name appears as an identifier**. If you wish to pay in person, Bruce Lindenmayer has volunteered to accept subscriptions at the May COG meeting. It will NOT be possible to pay at the June meeting at the Night Parrot presentation.

COG hosted the NSW Bird Interest Groups Network meeting (BIGnet) in April. Outcomes included the setting up of a working group to further consider the issue of databases, and there was much interest expressed in a suggestion that Birdlife Australia be represented at each BIGnet meeting and report on progress with their activities.

*Sandra Henderson*

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## What to watch out for this month—continued from Page 1

of the migration. Lindsay tells me that on the Thursday there were still plenty, but less than the day before, and from Friday onwards the numbers dropped off significantly.

This drop in numbers is consistent with chatline reports, despite the favourable near zero temperatures overnight in the second half of Easter. Clearly many birds had no longer been able to wait and migrated much less conspicuously in the intervening period. So by the time this column is published in early May the honeyeater migration as well as the overall migration season will be nearly over, with most the last two of the spring/summer migrant species to stay in any numbers, the **Dusky Woodswallow** and the **Olive-backed Oriole**, usually leaving by the first or second week of May.

While many species are considered spring/summer migrants in the ACT, they do have different patterns of behaviour. Though less spectacular than the above, readers will have seen some of the larger species such as the **Red Wattlebird** and the **Noisy Friarbird**, and perhaps even the **Rainbow Bee-eater** (of which there was

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**Fuscous Honeyeater**

**Photo: Julian Robinson**

## What to watch out for this month—continued from Page 2

a late record of one hawking at Red Hill at the end of March) and **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike**, migrating out of Canberra. However, this has seldom been observed or reported for other larger species such as the abovementioned **Oriole**, the **Latham's Snipe** and the **Dollarbird**, perhaps because they don't flock and move out singly or with just a few birds together.

The smaller **Dusky Woodswallow** does tend to form flocks before and during migrating, with a number of chatline postings noting this over the past month, including a report of around 100 coming in to roost along Jerrabomberra Avenue in Narrabundah, and a report of even more at a couple of roost sites in the hills near the Yass River towards the north of the COG area of interest (AOI). Flocks of this species can move through or slightly above tree top level, as well as circling overhead, while they slowly drift along, sometimes quite high and difficult to detect except by their calling.

Some smaller birds flock together while migrating but without any obvious indication that they are moving in a distinct direction. These include the **Silvereye**, and the **Spotted** and **Striated Pardalote**, which also have been observed and reported over the past month. While again the former is probably better known, in the past I too have observed large mixed flocks (>100) of pardalotes milling around without a clear sense of which direction they are moving. The **Grey Fantail** also can form flocks of up to a dozen or more, but move along through the bushes/trees in a

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Cattle Egret

Photo: David Cook



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## 2014 tours

25 May — 8 June  
**Top End including  
Mitchell Plateau/black grasswren option**

12 — 27 June  
**Queensland's Gulf of Carpentaria  
& Atherton Tablelands**

3 — 10 August  
**New Caledonia**

6 — 25 September  
**Strzelecki Track 35<sup>th</sup> tour  
The four states outback expedition**

30 September — 8 October  
**NSW Central Coast. Gloucester Tops NP,  
Barren Grounds NR, Tapin Tops NP.**

10 — 19 December  
**SW Western Australia**

**Plains-wanderer Weekends 2014**  
25 & 26 October 2014  
6 & 7 December 2014

Please see itineraries, checklists and  
latest news on our website

[www.philipmaher.com](http://www.philipmaher.com)

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### What to watch out for this month—continued from Page 3

somewhat defined direction, though not necessarily to the north.

Early in the month Harvey Perkins posted that he thought he had observed **Welcome Swallows** moving high over his place in a more deliberate northerly direction and asked if anyone else had observed evidence of a “swallow migration”. Personally I can’t recall observing such behaviour of this “semi-migratory” species, which is often more obvious in winter than in summer in my local area, though there have been very few at all over the past 18 months or so. One could pose the same question for the related **Tree** and **Fairy Martins**, with the latter certainly being a flocking species; for example nesting colonially.

Perhaps like so many others of our spring/summer migrants they’re simply here one day and gone tomorrow. This applies to the five local

species of cuckoo including the **Eastern Koel**, the **Sacred Kingfisher**, the **Australian Reed-Warbler**, the **Western** and **White-throated Gerygone**, **Rufous Whistler**, **Leaden Flycatcher** and the **Mistletoebird**. As they are “passage migrants” from the mountains, the **Rufous Fantail**, which were still being observed towards the end of March, tend to be accepted as on migration, as is the case for the **Satin Flycatcher**.

Though varying numbers of the above species will overwinter in Canberra, observations of many of the above declined in April and will be significant from now until they return next spring, and should be reported to the COG database. One species that does seem to be staying over in good numbers this year is the **Superb Parrot**, of which there were still over 30 mainly young birds at the Harrison playing fields towards the end of April.

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## A Special Presentation – “Rediscovery of the Night Parrot”

You are invited to attend a special event, that will be co-sponsored by Eremaea eBird (ACT) and the Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG), to hear a presentation by **John Young** about the ‘Rediscovery of the Night Parrot’.

**Please note this will not be a normal COG meeting but a special event for which you will need to register. It is also being held both at a different venue and starting time.**

**When: Wednesday 11 June 2014 at 7:00 pm**

**Where: St Marks Theological College Chapel  
corner Kings Avenue and Blackall Street  
Barton ACT**

The Chapel is a concrete bunker-looking building right on the corner of Kings Avenue. Further details of location and parking will be provided in the June Gang-gang.

Come and hear this wonderful story of a search lasting 17,000 hours for a parrot considered extinct.

The presentation will take about 90 minutes and will begin with the natural history of the Night Parrot. It will then cover the search for the parrot from when John first recorded its call until its subsequent sighting and capture by digital photography. It will conclude with the ongoing study of the bird’s ecology. The presentation will contain about 25 still images and a short video of the Night Parrot. There will be time set aside for questions at the end of the presentation.

On the night, John will also be selling limited edition prints of the Night Parrot (\$300) to raise funds for continuing study about this bird.

**Despite the move to a larger venue you will still need to register for this event** and you should email your intention to attend to Alastair Smith of Eremaea eBird (ACT) on [ebirdact@gmail.com](mailto:ebirdact@gmail.com) or by phone on 0428 466739.

The cut-off date for registrations will be **16 May 2014**, **so please ensure you register as early as possible.**



Our winter altitudinal migrants also seem to be absent today but here tomorrow. This applies to the **Scarlet Robin**, many of which seem to have come into Canberra this year with John Leonard seeing 30 at Kama NR, which is a very large number to be seen in one area. By contrast the much more flocking species the **Flame Robin** doesn't seem to be present close in to Canberra in any numbers yet, though larger numbers have been reported from Tidbinbilla and around Tharwa. The **Rose** and **Pink Robins**, the **Crescent** and **Yellow-tufted Honeyeater**, which are usually first seen during April or early May, also follow this pattern. The first **Rose Robins** were reported towards the end of April from the ANBG, which is probably the best place to see these species. Interestingly I can find no reports of the **Fuscous Honeyeater** so far this autumn; this species may accompany the migrating honeyeater flocks or suddenly turn up.

The **Swift Parrot**, which migrates from Tasmania, is probably an exception and there have been two separate reports of this species, at the Jerrabomberra woodland at the beginning, and at the Harrison playing fields in Gungahlin at the end of April, respectively. Interestingly **Little Lorikeets** were observed at the nearby big Mulligans Flat dam on the same day. Further sightings may be expected if the gums in my local area are any indication, as these are starting to flower very well, mainly attracting **Red Wattlebirds** at the moment. A surprise observation was of a couple of **Purple-crowned Lorikeets** in amongst the **Rainbows** in Barbara Allan's garden early in April, surprisingly eating Granny Smith apples, but they might be attracted to the flowering gums as well.

Due to the rain the numbers of waterbirds being reported seem to be finally declining, with the exception being the **Cattle Egret** of which well over 100 were reported among the cattle at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands during April, with also up to 21 **White-faced Herons** reported. While many very large mixed feeding flocks (MFFs) were reported in the first half of April, the rain too seems to have affected them with few reported

since; perhaps they may have broken up due to the better food sources available, but certainly there have been no MFFs in my GBS site for the second half of April. However, it appears the rain in mid-February and the first half of April hasn't triggered any autumn breeding with the only reports I can find are of a young **Eastern Koel** visiting and gorging itself in the fig tree in a Flynn garden at least as late as 28 March, as well as **Australian Ravens** apparently refurbishing last year's nest.

A sure sign that winter is approaching is the large flocks of **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** and **Galahs** that I've been seeing since Easter in my local patch as well as elsewhere. The flocks of the **Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos** also seemed to be larger in April than for some time. So while we're coming into the quieter period on the ACT's bird calendar there is always still plenty to see. As usual always please ensure that all significant observations end up on the COG database.

Jack Holland

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## COG Sales Desk

We are seeking someone who would be prepared to run the COG Sales Desk. The task is not onerous and is greatly valued by COG members. The Desk will remain open until the end of the financial year. If after that the position is not filled the Desk will be suspended until further notice.

Please give Chris Davey a call on 62546324 or email [chris\\_davey@aapt.net.au](mailto:chris_davey@aapt.net.au) for details.

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## Field Trip Reports

### Sunday 6 April – Nursery Swamp

Fourteen COG members and friends participated in this field trip, the first time that COG has been to Nursery Swamp since August 2010. Our leader, David McDonald, briefed participants about the significance of the area, emphasising the special features of the swamp itself and of the Aboriginal heritage of the area. We commenced our walk up the ridge, through scattered Silver Wattles, knocking onto the elusive (on this trip) **Crescent Honeyeater**. **Superb Lyrebirds** were calling in the gully and had been scratching along the track, although we did not see any. After a welcome break at the saddle, while descending towards Nursery Creek we encountered a substantial mixed feeding flock, the most interesting member of which was a **Crested Shrike-tit**, a delightful bird seen reasonably well by all participants. As expected, species diversity and bird abundance was relatively low in the Snow Gum/Black Sallee/frost hollow areas, although a couple of patches of flowering Snow Gums were productive. The countryside was green and the swamp had plenty of water in it, providing a delightful lunch spot. On the way back to the cars, on the downhill section, Sue Lashko heard and recognised the faint contact call of the **Spotted Quail-thrush**, enabling about half the group to view this elusive species. Three species of robins were observed but, sadly, no **Gang-gang Cockatoos**. (Don't they know there is a survey on?) The most abundant species was the **White-naped Honeyeater**. We observed 36 species in total (35 in the forest area between the car park and the ridge top and 21 in the area south of this down to the swamp), a reasonable list for this time of year.

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GOG members and friends enjoy an outing to Nursery Swamp

Photo: Evelyn Dias



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## Field Trip Reports—continued from Page 6

### Sunday 13 April – K2C surveys

The ninth bird survey in the K2C region between Williamsdale and Bredbo was held on 13 April. After a couple of weeks of soaking rains we were fortunate to have dry conditions for the morning to survey 40 sites across 21 properties. It turned out to be a day of robins with **Scarlet Robin** seen on 14 properties, **Flame Robin** on three, **Hooded Robin** on four and **Eastern Yellow Robin** on five properties. **Brown Treecreeper** was found on six properties, **Diamond Firetail** on five and **Restless Flycatcher** on three. The best site of the day was perhaps one of the most unassuming – a riparian planting with four-year-old trees and shrubs on “The Creek”. The trees are only just reaching the height at which small birds will use them and often there are only a few **Superb Fairy-wrens** and **Yellow-rumped Thornbill** in the site. However, during the survey the planting was full of these more common species but also 15 **Diamond Firetail**, 4 **Flame Robin** and 2 **Scarlet Robin**, while nearly 400 **Yellow-faced Honeyeater** passed through the site. This was the highest number of honeyeaters recorded during the survey. In more favourable conditions during past autumn surveys this number has been recorded at many sites as the birds stream across the Murrumbidgee River but conditions for this survey were generally too windy or overcast. The 15 birders enjoyed sharing the morning’s results over a barbeque lunch at the shearing shed on Bush Heritage Australia’s Scottsdale Reserve. Thank you once again to the landholders for access, to Bush Heritage for covering the lunch and the COG members for helping with the survey. The next K2C bird survey is on Sunday 12 October.

Nicki Taws

### Wednesday 16 April - Tidbinbilla

Twenty-four members and guests gathered in the carpark at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve on a perfect autumn day. Today was definitely a day with a lot of **Flame Robins**. At one point, as we approached the *Kunzea ericoides* above the open grass paddock near the start, 12 'brown birds' (ie females or juveniles) were visible on the mullein stalks and rocks while 4 male birds had flaunted their luridness earlier. Mixed in with these was a single **Scarlet Robin** (unclear whether a female or a male just coming into colour). Then a male **Hooded Robin** and 2 females were also sighted. The final robin noted was an **Eastern Yellow**

**Robin** lurking just within the boundary of the Kunzea, and a second later in the vicinity of the rock shelter. There were also at least 26 **Dusky Woodswallows** swooping around the grassland. They seemed to be enjoying tormenting the Robins.

Entering the woodland two **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes** were seen. This was followed by 6 **Diamond Firetails** (a 7th was seen later when we re-entered the grassland). 3 **Wedge-tailed Eagles** were soaring overhead, two of them very high. A **Crescent Honeyeater** was heard calling and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** were steadily migrating through the area, heading over towards the Bullen Range. In total we recorded 44 species.

Martin Butterfield

### Thursday 17 to Monday 21 April – Round Hill Nature Reserve

The Easter campout was held at Whoey Tank in Round Hill NR, some 50 kms west of Lake Cargelligo, but the trip bird count began and ended at the lake including at the excellent sewerage works. Everything considered (read on!), it was a very successful and enjoyable trip to western NSW and 129 different species were recorded, in addition to various mammals, reptiles, a frog, moths and butterflies.

At Lake Cargelligo Sewerage Works were a variety of ducks and waders, including **Red-necked Stint**, **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** and **Red-capped Plover**, plus numerous **White-winged Fairy-wrens**. The lake itself again proved a reliable site for **Great Crested Grebe**, and two **White-bellied Sea-Eagles** were also seen.

Early morning surveys near our campsite at Whoey Tank usually proved rewarding, including an obliging **Southern Scrub-robin** allowing close inspection. Although there was little eucalypt flowering, some mistletoe was in bloom or fruit and no less than 14 species of **honeyeaters** were observed over the weekend. The most common were **Spiny-cheeked**, **Grey-fronted** and **Striped**, with only one **Painted** which, along with a **Speckled Warbler**, were first sightings for these species in Round Hill NR, according to Eremaea.

Surprisingly, perhaps due to this being an autumn visit, the old wheatfield site, now revegetated, proved relatively unproductive. Although both targeted species

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## Field Trip Reports—Continued from Page 7

of **Gilbert** and **Red-lored Whistlers** were calling, they proved very elusive and only those of our members with excellent eyesight obtaining glimpses or actual sightings of the former, while the latter stayed out of sight. **Chestnut Quail-thrush** were often heard giving their high-pitched two-note call but were much more difficult to see than in spring.

Whereas the actual total of 129 species recorded is most satisfactory perhaps the number of singletons observed illustrates a lower density of some species as compared with results from previous visits to these western areas of NSW in the more favourable spring season.

Apart from our regular campout supporters, it was great to have some new faces who took the opportunity to learn from more experienced birders who were always more than happy to share their expertise about birds not usually seen in the ACT and surrounding areas. Good examples included **Crested Bellbird**, **Spotted Nightjar**, **Bar-shouldered Dove**, **Splendid Fairy-wren**, **Inland** and **Chestnut-rumped Thornbill**, **Shy Heathwren** and **Grey-crowned** and **White-browed Babbler**.

In addition to birdwatching, the group had also agreed to assist NSW National Parks and Wildlife with a search for the extremely rare *Grevillea ilicifolia*, only three specimens of which are known from NSW, with these occurring in Round Hill NR. Along with members of the Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists, the intention was to spend Saturday morning surveying two areas of the

reserve. Unfortunately, one of the Field Nats became separated from the group and despite much searching, tooting of car horns, shouting, etc, he could not be located and spent the night lost in the mallee causing many anxious moments for both groups and a subdued mood at the campfire that night.

The Ranger returned to our camp early the next morning to enlist our support for a further search, along with local police and SES personnel, with a helicopter on standby. We all assembled at 0900 ready to be organised into search teams, and were absolutely delighted and surprised when an SES vehicle arrived, having driven along the road nearest to where the lost man had entered the mallee, and there he was safe and well sitting in the back seat. He was found 7 to 10 km west of where he had last been seen and vowed to go out and buy a GPS and learn how to use it! – a salutary lesson for all who venture into the mallee.

On behalf of the touring group I sincerely thank Sue Lashko for her confident and capable leadership, especially during the time of unexpected stress.

Terry Bell



Yellow-throated Miner

Photo: David Cook



Painted Honeyeater

Photo: David Cook



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## Future Field Trips

At the start of each trip, and before proceeding on the trip, each participant must sign a COG Field Trip Registration Form, which acknowledges the participant's responsibilities. The form reads as follows:

I declare I am capable of undertaking this trip having: discussed with the Trip Leader any limitations I have (e.g. medications, physical), assessed the risks to myself and my property, and ensured I am adequately equipped.

I will follow the instructions of the Field Trip Leader, and advise them before moving away from the group.

Changes to trips are notified on the trips page of the COG website <http://canberrabirds.org.au/> and on the COG chat-line at : <http://bioacoustics.cse.unsw.edu.au/archives/html/canberrabirds/2012-03/index.html>

A reminder that COG has a long-standing policy to give **preference to members** for field trips that can accommodate only a limited number of people.

### Saturday 17 May – Australian National Botanic Gardens

This morning walk will be the first for 2014 aimed specifically to help beginners and new members identify birds and to learn about their behaviour and calls. The Botanic Gardens are especially suitable for such an outing, as they allow the opportunity to observe a range of local bush birds in a variety of habitats. Due to the available food supply they are also a relative haven for birds during late autumn/winter. Anthony Overs will lead this outing, which will consist of a stroll through this lovely part of Canberra for a couple of hours.

Meet at 9.15am at the ANBG bus shelter. Registration is essential. Please book your place with Anthony (6254 0168, or [anthony.overs@gmail.com](mailto:anthony.overs@gmail.com)), who will be happy to discuss whether this outing is suitable for you. Please make sure to bring your binoculars and field guide.

### Saturday 17 May – Tallaganda

Our evening spotlighting for nocturnal birds and mammals will commence from Lowden Forest Park picnic area in Tallaganda State Forest at 5pm. If we are lucky we will hear/see **Powerful Owl**, **Southern Boobook** and Greater Glider. There is also a possibility of Sugar Glider, Common Ringtail and Common Brushtail Possum, **Tawny Frogmouth** and **Owlet-nightjar**.

Bring your own picnic tea (& table and chair if you want) which we will have just before sunset. Once it gets dark we will drive slowly back towards Canberra spotlighting and listening as we go. You will also need a torch, warm clothes and a map to get you there and back. A spotlight is not necessary, but if you have one all the better. Rain and spotlighting don't mix, so if rain is forecast the trip will be cancelled.

Lowden Forest Park picnic area has some interesting history and a couple of short walks in the forest nearby, so you might enjoy arriving early enough to spend some time looking around before dark.

As we are stopping and starting on the side of forest roads in the dark there will be a limit of 5 vehicles for this trip. If you are interested in coming, contact Kathy Walter or John Goldie at [walter.goldie@optusnet.com.au](mailto:walter.goldie@optusnet.com.au).

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### Sunday 25 May – Bungonia

Thank you to Denis Wilson who will lead this outing. Participants should meet at 7.30am in the carpark at the netball centre just north of the intersection of Northbourne Ave and Mouat Street, Lyneham. We will carpool from there with passengers making a contribution to petrol costs of the driver. It takes about 1 ½ hours to reach Bungonia. Bring morning tea and lunch. Please register with Sue Lashko at [smlashko@gmail.com](mailto:smlashko@gmail.com)

### Friday 6 to Monday 9 June - Deua Tin Huts

The June long weekend trip will be to Deua Tin Huts, south of Captain's Flat and 1 ½ hours drive from Canberra. Accommodation will be in 3 huts with a maximum of 14 beds. Note that 2 of the huts are open plan (ie 4 people will be sharing the same room). More details are available on [www.deuatinhuts.com](http://www.deuatinhuts.com). We will bird on the property and in various spots nearby such as the Big Hole and Marble Arch.

Register with Sue Lashko on [smlashko@gmail.com](mailto:smlashko@gmail.com). DO NOT book with Deua Tin Huts – COG has already made a booking for the 3 huts. NB: there is currently one spot available.

### Saturday 14 June - Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve- Superb Lyrebird survey

Since the January 2003 bushfires Peter Fullagar and Chris Davey have been monitoring the return of the **Superb Lyrebird** to an area of the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. They wish to get an idea of the present distribution within the Reserve and are calling for expressions of interest from COG members to join them at 8.00am to walk the trails and to record the location of calling birds. Depending on the trails walked the survey should take about three hours.

This outing will be a repeat of the very successful surveys conducted at this time of the year since 2004. If interested and for further details please contact Chris Davey on 62546324 (h), email [chris\\_davey@aapt.net.au](mailto:chris_davey@aapt.net.au).

### Saturday 21 June to Sunday 22 June - Moruya area

In association with the Eurobodalla Natural History Group this weekend outing will visit local estuaries, lakes, beaches and rainforest of the Moruya area. After a drive down on Friday evening, 20 June (3 hours from Canberra), we will visit various local birding spots starting early Saturday morning with a return to Canberra after lunch on Sunday.

Accommodation will be at BIG4 Moruya Heads East Dolphin Beach Caravan Park, see <http://turu.com.au/parks/nsw/illawarra---south-coast/eurobodalla-coast/big4-moruya-heads-east-dolphin-beach.aspx> for details, with camping sites and cabins available. The caravan park will be our base for this outing. Bring along some appropriate food for a BBQ on Saturday night after which we plan to go spotlighting for gliders and owls.

Contact Chris Davey [chris\\_davey@aapt.net.au](mailto:chris_davey@aapt.net.au) or 62546324 for further information or to register your interest.

### Sunday 6 July - Bird Watching by Bike – Mulligan's Flat & Goorooyarroo

Bird watching by bicycle is a great way to explore larger areas and to find those winter mixed feeding flocks. Come and explore the trails of Mulligan's Flat and Goorooyarroo Nature Reserves by bike, some of the best woodland habitats in the Canberra area. You will need your own off-road capable bike (mountain bike or similar) and a reasonable level of fitness. Off road cycling ability is essential. Bird watching expertise is optional. The trails we will explore are all vehicular management trails which are mostly in good condition and gently sloping although there are a few short steeper sections and some rough parts.

Meet at the car park at the main entrance to Mulligan's Flat, Amy Ackman St, Forde at 8:00am.

To participate, please contact Duncan McCaskill by email at: [duncan.mccaskill@gmail.com](mailto:duncan.mccaskill@gmail.com)

### Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 September – Eden pelagics

COG has booked the weekend of September 6 and 7 for two one-day pelagic trips. The outings leave from Eden Harbour in the early morning (time to be confirmed), and return mid-afternoon. Each trip can accommodate 12 people, and the cost per person per trip will be \$100.

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## Future Field Trips—Continued from Page 10

Organising travel and accommodation will be each individual's responsibility but there may be opportunities for car-pooling and an informal get-together for dinner/drinks in Eden on the Friday and Saturday evenings.

Bookings will only be confirmed when full payment is received. Payment must be made by June 30. These trips need to be fully subscribed to ensure COG does not make a loss, and as is the case with all paid trips, preference is given to COG members. Once you've booked and paid, no refunds can be given unless a replacement can be found.

As with all boating activities the trip will be weather dependent and rough seas could lead to the cancellation or postponement of the trip.

Please book with Sandra Henderson (shirmax2931@gmail.com) and indicate which day you prefer (Saturday or Sunday). Payment by direct deposit to COG's bank account is preferred – details will be sent to those who express interest. These trips often fill up fast, so if interested please book early.

## COG 50<sup>th</sup> Photograph Exhibition

### Canberra's Favourite Bird Photo 2014

As part of the 50<sup>th</sup> celebrations, COG will be holding a photographic exhibition highlighting the birds of the Canberra region.

The exhibition will be from **30 June to 5 July 2014** in the Exhibition Space on the first floor of the Legislative Assembly Building on Civic Square, London Circuit.

The exhibition will be to celebrate and promote our birds to the public. It will aim to not only raise awareness about the wonderful birds found in this region but promote COG as the organisation that works on behalf of conserving our birds and their habitat.

The exhibition will showcase our many talented COG photographers and it **open to all financial COG members**.

Photographs must include a ***bird species that can be verified as having been seen in the COG area of interest included in the list at <http://canberrabirds.org.au/our-birds/bird-finder/>.*** We are seeking up to a **maximum of 3 photos per member** and entry in the competition is free.

Photos can be colour or black and white, plain or matte and printed suitable for exhibition. Entries should be no larger than A2 area image size and entrants will be responsible for mounting their entries for hanging in the Exhibition Space. We will provide information on any particular other requirements for hanging/display once we have all registrations.

To engage the public in celebrating the birds on display at the exhibition we will be asking members of the public who visit to vote for the photo they like best. There will be a cash prize of \$500 for the photographer who wins the public vote for the winning photo and a runner's-up prize of \$250 for the photo that comes second in the public voting. There will also be a prize for one lucky person who is one of those who voted for the most popular photo. In the event of any issues or problems arising with the competition and voting process, the organisers, (Alison Russell-French and Neil Hermes), will make the final decision on the winner, the runner-up and the member of the public selected for a prize. These will all be announced at the conclusion of the competition and the winners advised.

Photos will be secured through the security guards who screen all those entering the publicly accessible areas of the Assembly

Those who wish to enter the competition should register by 28 May with Neil Hermes ([hermes.neil@gmail.com](mailto:hermes.neil@gmail.com)). Entries in an email must be accompanied by the following details: photographer's name, email address and phone number, photo title, bird species in the photo, location, date and brief details of the photo circumstances.



## Advertisements

### Nature Lodge Optics

This month we welcome our new advertisers Nature Lodge Optics, based in Huskisson, Jervis Bay. This family owned business has been supplying quality binoculars to customers in the Canberra region since 2007. Originally established in the UK in 1946, the owners established a branch in Australia several years ago and have become the region's leading independent binocular store.

Open 7 Days, the store always has over 100 pairs of binoculars in stock with a particular emphasis on birdwatching products. Major brands such as Steiner, Zeiss, Bushnell, Nikon and Pentax are represented together with smaller hi-tech brands like Weaver, Vortex, Forest Optics, Visionary and Vanguard. A selection of Spotting Scopes, Night Vision and Tripods are always available.

As a family business and NOT a franchise the owners Daniel and Joanna Payne will always be happy to source the specialist or unusual products that individual customers require having established a global network of suppliers. The store also specialises in polarized eyewear with brands such as Maui Jim, RayBan & Oakley to name just a few.

The helpful and informative website [www.binoculars4u.com.au](http://www.binoculars4u.com.au) is regularly updated but is no substitute for personal service and recommendation which is always on hand.

We welcome customers new and old to call us on 02 4441 7770 .

### Questabird

'[QuestaBird](http://www.questabird.com/) is a fun new adventure app for mobile devices that gets kids (and adults too!) outdoors and experiencing the environment. Players join quests to photograph birds, earn gold, buy supplies, gain levels, build their collection and become Australia's highest-rated adventurers. The game uses real bird data, with all the known Australian species, along with GPS location tagging. Verified sightings are submitted to the Atlas of Living Australia to help protect our biodiversity.



As part of the COG's 50th anniversary, [QuestaBird](http://www.questabird.com/) will include a special COG-sponsored "Gang-gang Cockatoo Quest" for the Canberra region, with special prizes, bonus gold, and the sightings coming directly to COG for follow-up.

To find out more log onto <http://www.questabird.com/>

Note: The game is currently available only on Android devices, with an iPhone



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### MUDBRICK COTTAGE—MALLACOOTA

Our mudbrick cottage (Blue Wren Cottage) is available for rental. It is set amongst the trees in Mallacoota, Victoria (approximately 4 hours drive from Canberra). 10 minutes walk to the beach, 5 minutes walk to the golf course and about 15 minutes walk to town. It sleeps 4-6 upstairs and there is a sofa bed downstairs. It is fully self-contained with a kitchen and laundry.

**Contact:** Barbara de Bruine (02) 6258 3531, or [barbdebrune@hotmail.com](mailto:barbdebrune@hotmail.com)

### DEUA TIN HUTS (Via Braidwood)

Comfortable accommodation on the door-step of the Deua National Park at Krawarree via Braidwood NSW. Three cosy huts accommodating up to 14 people.

A short walk into the Deua National Park, the Big Hole and Marble Arch, walks in the beautiful Shoal haven Valley.

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# Gang-gang Cockatoo Project Update—April 2014

## Sightings

It has now been almost 3 months since the start of the project and the response has been fantastic. Reports of sightings to the online portal have now exceeded 720 with over 215 contributors providing their observations to the survey. In addition, there have been 230 observations from other sources, all of which are now providing very useful information.

After the launch of the project in mid-March there was a great response with an average of about 12 reports per day, since falling to about 4 per day. Whether the decline in the number of records is due to their being fewer birds in the area, or whether observers are no longer reporting their observations, is unknown at this stage. It is of interest though that the number of observations reported has fallen since the reversal to Eastern Standard Time. We would be most interested to hear from those who initially provided regular reports and now no longer do to find out if the birds are no longer being sighted. Please respond via [ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au).

From observations so far, the suburbs with the most sightings are those that are on the edge of North Canberra and about Mt Ainslie, Mt Majura, O'Connor Ridge and Black Mountain. The only records from Belconnen are in Aranda with occasional observations from the John Knight Memorial Park and Gossan Hill in Bruce. In South Canberra the most observations are from Curtin, Deakin and Yarralumla, whilst Torrens and Fisher are the top suburbs from Woden and Weston Creek. To date there are virtually no observations from Tuggeranong or Gungahlin. Whether these observations reflect observer or Gang-gang distribution is unknown but past observations from the COG Garden Bird Survey tend to support the latter distribution.

Average group size has varied from 3.2 in February to 2.9 in March with an increase to 3.5 in April, although flock size has varied considerably from single observations to a maximum of 25 birds from Gossan Hill in Bruce on 10 April and 30 birds from Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve on 13 April. There are still reports of young begging from adults. As winter approaches it is important to record where birds are feeding, whether from trees and bushes or from feed provided by householders.



Gang-gang Cockatoo

*Photo: Julian Robinson*

## Muster

A most important part of the survey will be held over the week starting Wednesday May 21<sup>st</sup>. This will be the second Muster. We urge as many contributors as possible to participate by recording for each of the seven days the maximum number of Gang-gangs observed within a 100m radius around a site you designate. For further details please log onto <http://canberrabirds.org.au/observing-birds/gang-gang-survey/gang-gang-muster-instructions/>. All observations are important, including those where no Gang-gangs are recorded all week. Observations can be reported online or on paper forms obtained from the website or at the COG meeting on May 14.

## Breeding sites

As noted in the March update, particular importance should be given to locating breeding sites within the survey area. If anyone knows of breeding sites could they please let us know via [ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au). All information will be kept confidential so please DO NOT record the location of known nesting sites on the COG-ALA online data entry portal. Possible breeding sites are those where birds are seen to *frequently* inspect or visit hollows during the breeding season. Sites where adults have been observed feeding young or where birds have been observed 'hollow-inspecting' very occasionally or out of the breeding season do not indicate breeding sites.

*Continued Page 14*

### School and community engagement

The project team has been busy meeting with a range of people to drum up interest in the Gang-gang survey. Our PCS rangers and field staff are particularly important observers in the rural and remote parts of the ACT and are being encouraged to report sightings. We have met with PCS staff at Casuarina Sands, Tidbinbilla and Namadgi depots and are especially chuffed to have the Ranger up at Bendora Dam, Brandon Galpin, keeping an eye out and sending in sightings.

We are also following up interest from ACT scout groups following the distribution of materials via the ACT Scouts Commissioner for Environment Activities, John Feint. We presented to a lively group of scouts at the 13<sup>th</sup> Canberra Scout Group at O'Connor. Scout leader Graham Downie is a keen amateur birdo and the scouts had lots of good questions about Gang-gangs and birds. The group went home with Muster forms and an ID sheet to participate in the May Muster Count. Scouts can use the May and future Gang-gang Muster counts toward their Environment Award ('badge'). Any COG members associated with local Scout groups who think their group might be interested in the Muster Count should contact the project team.

An article will appear in the first ACT auSSI Schools newsletter early this term to invite schools to participate in the Gang-gang survey and May Muster count. We are also working on resource materials that will assist teachers/students compile a bird list for the schoolyard or as a study site. This is being promoted as a companion activity to the Gang-gang survey or as an enrichment exercise. Campbell High School is starting off with birdwatching as an enrichment activity and we are talking at the School Assembly in early May about the Gang-gang survey and Muster Count.

One of the opportunities that may emerge from engaging with students and scouts interested in birds is the potential for a junior or youth chapter of COG that could organise youth-based activities. There are keen kids out there and what a great outcome this would be in COG's 50<sup>th</sup> year.

If you have any queries or wish to report any problems please send an email to [ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au)

*The GG Project survey team*

## BOOK REVIEW

### Booderee National Park – The Jewel Of Jervis Bay

This hard-back 'coffee table' book was launched by Federal Environment Minister, Greg Hunt in late March. It is a co-operative effort between the ANU Fenner School of Environment and Society and the Commonwealth owned and managed Booderee National Park at Jervis Bay. Booderee is one of the most popular national parks in eastern Australia, currently attracting more than 450,000 visitors annually: more than Kakadu and Uluru combined.

The book looks at the ecological connections between plants, animals and the environment in the park, reviews the research undertaken there over the past decade and at impacts on its ecology. There is a detailed discussion of the impact of fires, especially a large wildfire which burnt almost 50% of the park in 2003, but provided an opportunity to measure and understand the subsequent recovery of plants, animals and habitats. The history of the park area is discussed along with descriptions of its beautiful landscapes and numerous habitats. Every chapter has spectacular colour plates, mostly by renowned wildlife photographer Esther Beaton.

The book discusses the impact of pest animals (especially foxes) and weeds (especially Bitou Bush and pine wildlings) on the environment and the effects of carefully targeted baiting and weed control programs. The final chapter looks at future challenges (new feral animals and weeds, increased visitor numbers, land clearing and climate change) and possible initiatives such as reintroduction of locally extinct species and translocations of recently increasing populations of native herbivores.

**Declaration:** Most *Gang-gang* readers will know that first author (ANU Professor and COG member) David Lindenmayer is the son of this reviewer. COG members who have carried out bird surveys annually at Booderee since 2002 and at the Beecroft Peninsula since 2011 are acknowledged in the book. David will talk to the August COG meeting where a copy of this book will be the raffle prize.

"Booderee National Park –The Jewel of Jervis Bay" David Lindenmayer, Christopher MacGregor, Nick Dexter and Martin Fortesque (CSIRO Publishing) 142pp.

**Bruce Lindenmayer**

(There will be six copies of the book for sale at the May COG meeting at the reduced price of \$21 – ed.).



# CANBERRA ORNITHOLOGISTS GROUP INC

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL / APPLICATION

### 2014-2015



#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

1. Membership fees are **\$40 single** and **\$45 for family membership** for the 2014-2015 year. Fees are due on 1st July 2014 for most existing members - check your *Gang-gang/CBN* label to confirm when your membership expires.
2. You can pay by **cash or cheque** at the meetings, by **cheque/money order** through the post (not cash), or by **Electronic fund transfer (EFT)** as below. If by post, mail your payment to:

The Secretary  
Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc  
PO Box 301  
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608

3. **Electronic fund transfer (EFT)** is available to new and renewing members. If you pay your subscription by EFT please notify Sandra Henderson at [cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au) and include the completed application form (new members), or any changes in contact details (renewals). Ensure your initials and surname are on the transfer – if we cannot identify your payment your membership may lapse.

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<b>*Family memberships: List names of all family members covered by membership</b>			

- ☐ **Individual - \$40**
- ☐ **Institution - \$40**
- ☐ **\* Family - \$45**
- ☐ **Student (18yrs or under) - \$20**
- ☐ **Canberra Birds Conservation Fund Donation \$** (tax deductible; receipt will be issued)
- Total \$** *(office use only)*

If you would prefer to read either or both of the following COG publications on the COG website in lieu of receiving a printed copy, please tick the appropriate box(es) and you will be notified by email when it is uploaded to the web:

- ☐ **Gang-gang**
- ☐ **Canberra Bird Notes (CBN)**



# Gang-gang Cockatoo Survey

## Quarterly Muster May 2014

An asterisk (\*) means essential information.

Name of Observer\* .....

Location\* (address) .....

.....

Email\* OR .....

Phone number\* .....

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Choose a location where you usually spend time every day. Each day, record the **largest number** of Gang-gangs **near** your location at any **one time**. Birds can be perched or in flight. Use a separate form for each location if reporting from two or more e.g. school, work as well as home.

Gang-gangs	Wed 21 May	Thurs 22 May	Fri 23 May	Sat 24 May	Sun 25 May	Mon 26 May	Tues 27 May
<b>Largest number</b>							
or Zero (0) if none sighted							

### Notes:

Please send in any forms with **zero (0) sightings** for the Muster week including all zeros, as this is valuable data.

Cross out the day if you were away from the site for the whole day.

Any extra information about feeding, the sex or ages of Gang-gangs can be noted on the back of this form, or use a Gang-gang Data Sheet, [http://canberrabirds.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/GG\\_Survey\\_2014\\_final.pdf](http://canberrabirds.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/GG_Survey_2014_final.pdf)

If involved in the COG Garden Bird Survey (GBS) please complete this Muster Form and GBS chart.

### RETURN FORM:

Gang-gang Survey PO Box 301 Civic Square, ACT 2608	OR <b>Scan</b> this form and email to <a href="mailto:ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au">ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au</a> OR place in the Red Box at the COG monthly meetings
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### Muster Terms:

**'Largest Number'** - the most Gang-gang you observe at any one time. Example: two Gang-gangs fly over in the morning, and you see one Gang-gang feeding in the afternoon, Report 2 Gang-gangs, don't count the extra bird.

**'Near'** - within a radius of 100 metres of your location. Example: At your home, this is about 4 houses either side of your house along the street, and to the next street over both behind and in front of your house.

**'One time'** - a period of a few minutes.

Any questions please email: [ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:ggquery@canberrabirds.org.au)

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## Woodland autumn surveys –

### compiled by Jenny Bounds

#### Mulligan's Flat NR - Sunday 30 March

Jenny Bounds and the team did the autumn survey in misty but calm conditions, with fortunately no rain. There was a lot of bird movement with numerous flocks of pardalotes (100 in one group) and **Silvereyes**, as well as mixed flocks. Some spring/summer migrants were still around - both gerygones, **Rufous Whistler**, a **Noisy Friarbird**, a couple of sightings of **Olive-backed Orioles** as well as a few **Yellow-faced** and **White-naped Honeyeaters** moving through. Mostly autumn/winter species such as **Golden Whistlers** and **White-eared Honeyeaters** were also about. Highlights included two **Red-capped Robins** (a female and juvenile), quite a few **Scarlet Robins**, several sightings of Varied **Sittellas**, an Australian Hobby, a **Whistling Kite** at the large dam, and an **Australian Owlet-nightjar** calling at site 1. Interestingly there were 6 **Grey Shrike-thrush** in one spot and 6 **Willie Wagtails** near the large dam. Total species count was good at 63, the same as in autumn 2013. The next Mulligans Flat survey will be Sunday 29 June.

#### Goorooyaroo NR North - Sunday 30 March

Nicki Taws did the survey in foggy but mild and still conditions, with the fog dampening the usual dull background roar from the encroaching Gungahlin suburbs. 41 species were recorded in the survey sites. A few summer migrants were lingering – both gerygones, **Dusky Woodswallow**, **Mistletoebird**, **Rufous Whistler** and **Noisy Friarbird**. Unusually for these woodlands, honeyeaters were a feature of the survey. The mistletoe *Amyema miquellii* was flowering prolifically at some sites attracting **Yellow-faced**, **White-naped**, **Brown-headed** and **White-eared Honeyeaters**, **Eastern Spinebill**, **Noisy Friarbird** and **Red Wattlebird**. **Scarlet Robins** were heard or seen at almost every site. The highlight was one massive feeding flock of 23 species at one site which included 5 honeyeater species, 4 thornbill species, both pardalotes, **Scarlet Robin** and **Speckled Warbler**.

#### Goorooyaroo NR South – Sunday 23 March

Steve Holliday, Pru Buckley, Dave and Kathy Cook did the autumn survey in perfect conditions, grey initially but clearing later. There was a lot of Drooping Mistletoe and Brittle Gum in flower. 52 species were recorded overall, with 41 of these noted during the site counts. The first half of the survey was quiet but things seemed to pick up once the sun came out. The highlight was the normally bird-free site 7 which had a large mixed flock pass through. Species involved were **Striated** and **Spotted Pardalotes** (40+), **Eastern Spinebill**, **Yellow-faced**, **Brown-headed** and **White-eared Honeyeaters**, **Weebills**, **Grey Fantails** (10+), **Scarlet Robin**, **Varied Sittella** (3+), **Rufous Whistlers**, **Striated** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills**, and, unusually for the southern half of Gooroo, a **White-throated Treecreeper**. The latter is frequent in the more heavily vegetated northern half of the reserve, but very rarely recorded at our sites. Other birds of interest included an **Australian Hobby**, **Brown Falcon** and **Collared Sparrowhawk**, **Grey Currawongs**, and a couple of **Golden Whistlers**. Other than **Noisy Friarbirds**, which were in reasonable numbers, very few summer migrants were left, with single **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones** heard.

#### Mt Majura NR – 23 & 26 March

Kathy Walter and John Goldie did the survey mostly in fine weather. The woodlands were very quiet with 7 of the 9 sites having only between 4 and 9 species each, none of which were smaller than the **Noisy Miners** which were present at 6 of those sites. One site had a few other mid-size birds like **Willy Wagtail** and **Golden Whistler**. At site 4, there was a busy, large mixed feeding flock, with 19 species, including a **Speckled Warbler**, 2 **Scarlet Robins**, both Pardalote species and a **White-throated Treecreeper**. No migrating honeyeaters were seen or heard, although **Noisy Friarbirds** were still present in many locations. The area in general looked fairly dry, but should have picked up with the recent rain.

*Continued Page 18*



### Campbell Park/Mt Ainslie footslopes – 24 March

Michael Lenz carried out the survey on a calm but overcast day. The welcome rain developed well after the survey was completed. At the 9 sites, 35 species were recorded, with another 4 species in between. The number of species per site varied from 2 to 14. Small woodland species were scarce except in two mixed feeding flocks (each at a survey site). The flocks included **Speckled Warbler** (2x) and **Varied Sittella** (1x). Notable were several small groups and single birds of **Red Wattlebirds** and **Noisy Friarbirds** moving in a northerly direction, but stopping frequently to feed in mistletoes and younger foliage of some eucalypts. At one site a **Little Friarbird** was present as well. No smaller honeyeaters were migrating. Other species of interest were: **Brown Goshawk**, **Long-billed Corella**, a flock of 11 **Brown-headed Honeyeaters**, **Rufous Whistler** and **White-throated Gerygone**.

### Newline - 22 March

Sue Lashko reported on the survey in misty conditions, but birds were plentiful and noisy. 5 of the 9 sites yielded 15 or more species with the best site of the morning (in the second paddock and east of the track) having, among more common species, 4 **Southern Whiteface**, **Scarlet Robin**, a single **Double-barred Finch**, **Grey Currawong**, **Rufous Whistler** and **Western Gerygone**, as well as the only Yellow-faced Honeyeaters (3) for the day. The dominant honeyeaters, apart from the resident **Noisy Miners**, were **Noisy Friarbirds** (38 in total) and **Red Wattlebirds** (34). **Little Corellas** were recorded at two sites and **Crimson** and **Eastern Rosellas** had clearly had a successful breeding season. 4 **Dusky Woodswallows** glided above the front paddock, and 2 **Grey Butcherbirds** were seen, at opposite ends of the paddocks. Several trees in the front paddock were alive with a mixed feeding flock of **Striated Thornbills**, **Weebills** and **Striated Pardalotes**, about 90 birds in all. The only raptor of the day was a **Black-shouldered Kite**.

### Red Hill NR – Sunday 30 March

Harvey Perkins and Stuart Harris did the survey in foggy conditions after a deferred start until 8:30 and ended up finishing later than normal. This had some impact on

the birds recorded. Lots of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** on migration particularly from 11:00 am to midday – Over 1000 all up (largest flock 130) and these would not have been picked up if they had finished earlier. Ten **White-naped Honeyeaters** amongst the **Yellow-faced**. It was pretty quiet to start with due to the fog, almost no small birds, but eventually picked up with several **Scarlet Robins**, 10 **Golden Whistlers**, 4 **Rufous Whistlers** etc. Two new birds for the site – a **Rainbow Bee-eater** hawking at site 3, and two Red-capped Robins heard calling at site 4. Also, a pair of hobbies being harassed by a flock of **King-Parrots**, **Gang-Gangs** and **Galahs** and a duo of **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos**. All up, 33 species recorded (20 at survey plots, an additional 13 between sites) is pretty close to average for autumn, but numbers, boosted by counts of migrating honeyeaters, produced the highest ever individual count.

### Jerrabomberra West NR - 1 April

Jenny Bounds and Alison Russell-French did the survey in the woodland area on 1 April after a postponement the previous week on account of rain. The big highlight was **Swift Parrots**, at least 6 birds (though possibly more around), recorded at 3 places, seemingly moving south to north through the woodland edges. A first record for this site. There were 40 species total, quite good for autumn there, with 6 **Scarlet Robins**, summer migrants **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones** and **Rufous Whistlers** still around, **Golden Whistlers** (autumn winter visitor), **Speckled Warblers**, **Double-barred Finch**, some **Little Ravens** (as well as the usual **Australian Ravens**), and a few migrating **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**. There were some nice native wildflowers from the recent rains.

### Callum Brae NR – 20 March

Sandra Henderson did the survey on an overcast morning, recording **Scarlet Robins** in good numbers (they are a partial altitudinal migrant moving to lower woodlands in the cooler months). Also quite a few **Dusky Woodswallows** in two areas near the big pylons (they usually move out in the colder months). Other species were a small group of **Brown-headed Honeyeaters**, two young **Olive-backed Orioles**, and

*Continued Page 19*

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## Woodland Autumn Surveys—continued from Page 18

very large numbers of **Grey Fantails** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills** around. Three **Wedge-tailed Eagles** were circling above the entrance area.

### Rural leasehold in Tharwa – 23 March

David McDonald reported on the autumn survey, an unusually quiet day with only 21 species observed within the nine sites, and very low bird abundance as well. The site was very different from around 25 years ago, with the grass barely grown at all — the flatter areas have recently been burned presumably to stimulate grass growth — and a large proportion of the shrubs having disappeared. The **Striated Thornbill** was the most abundance species, followed by a flock of 12 **White-winged Choughs**. Disappointingly, no autumn mixed feeding flocks were seen, nor was any migratory activity. Furthermore, none of the threatened/endangered species that are usually observed at this site showed themselves during the survey. Of interest was a **Collared Sparrowhawk** making a half-hearted attempt to catch a Common Starling on the wing. **Gang-gang Cockatoos** were heard at two locations outside of the survey sites.

### Tuggeranong Hill NR – Sunday 30 March

Lia Battisson reported on the survey starting out in still, mild and sunny conditions. Later in the morning fog descended but didn't seem to affect the number of birds about. The Hill was alive with birds. **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**, accompanied by an occasional **White-naped Honeyeater**, streamed through from 8:30 am, in flocks of up to 120. Four sites had 10 or more species and **Scarlet Robins** were observed at 5 sites. Other highlights included a **Yellow Thornbill** which has not been recorded on the survey before and a large flock of **Spotted Pardalotes** on the move. In all thirty species were observed, twenty-five of those during the site counts.

### Majura Firing Range – Friday 11 April

It is often difficult to get onto the site at a preferred time, so the survey date was set in the first week of April rather than in March. On the day Barbara Allan and myself, together with the Defence Environmental Officer started the survey at 7.30 even though rain looked quite threatening.

By the time we had surveyed the first sites, the rain set in and we abandoned the survey.

We rescheduled to Friday 11 April, even though rain was forecast for the day. However, the BOM pressure map for NSW showed that between 7 and 10 am there was no rain. And sure enough, on the day, the early morning was fine and sunny for the earlier part of the morning, although there were overcast periods, and even a short period of very light drizzle. So in the end it turned out to be a great morning for birding following a couple of days of fairly constant rain.

Highlights of the day were the sighting of an Australian **Hobby** at the Grenade Range (where they had been observed nesting in previous years) and a brawl between 8 Magpies and a pair of **Brown Falcons** at Site 4. A group of 10 **Noisy Friarbirds** were seen perched in a dead tree, and as we departed the Range, 2 **Diamond Firetails** were seen just outside the Range Control building, together with 2 **Red-browed finches** and a **Superb Fairy Wren**.

We saw a total of 43 species, which is a good count for any time of year for these sites. Many **Scarlet Robins** were seen at different sites, and at Site 10 (which is often almost bereft of birds) there were 2 male **Rufous Whistlers**, 3 **Golden Whistlers**, a **White-eared Honeyeater** and a **Yellow-faced Honeyeater** in the one flock, in an interesting seasonal transition. There were groups of **Silvereye** (ranging between 10 and 100), groups of **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** (15 to 70) and groups of **White-naped Honeyeaters** (22). Unusually for that area, we observed 5 **White-faced Herons** scattered around the area.

There was only one breeding record, an **Australasian Grebe** with dependent young on the dam at Site 9.



Eastern Yellow Robin Photo: *Duncan McCaskill*

## Canberra Birds Conservation Fund

Donations to this fund are tax deductible. Funds are used to support projects that protect and enhance native birds and the environments that sustain them.

## COG membership

2014-2015 memberships:

- Singles: \$40
- Family: \$45
- Institution: \$40
- School student (under 18) \$20

## New members

COG welcomes the following new members:

A Carse, Kaleen  
R McAndrew, O'Connor  
R Dean, Kaleen  
T Merkling, Turner  
G Wilson, Deakin  
K Black, Fraser  
M Carse, Reid  
M Mulcahy, Wanniasa  
A Quick, Garran  
M Gilbert, Kambah  
K Fisher, Julatten Qld

## NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline for June 2014 edition

**Wednesday 28 May 2014**

**Please send articles, advertisements, updates etc. to the Editors at:**

[gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:gang-gang@canberrabirds.org.au) Or

**c/- The Secretary COG, PO Box 301 Civic Square, ACT 2608**

Articles should be less than 500 words (300 for reports of 1-day field trips) except by prior arrangement with the editor.

Photographs (prints or electronic) with or without articles are encouraged.

## COG information

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## COG website

[www.canberrabirds.org.au](http://www.canberrabirds.org.au)

## COG library

For all enquiries or access to COG's library phone Barbara Allan on 6254 6520

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## COG E-mail Discussion List

COG has an email discussion list for members and friends: 'Canberra Birds'.

Join the list by following the links on the COG website or by sending an empty email message to:

[canberrabirds-  
subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:canberrabirds-subscribe@canberrabirds.org.au)

The subject is 'subscribe' (without the quotation marks).

## Canberra Bird Notes

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